

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 130

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Herbert L. Harper for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm during their years of public service; and

WHEREAS, Herbert L. Harper is one such estimable public servant who served with distinction for thirty-one years as Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper took a much deserved retirement from his post on October 31, 2006; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary thirty-seven-year tenure as a member of the Tennessee Historical Commission, Herbert L. Harper distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to this State; and

WHEREAS, born in Clemmons, North Carolina, in 1928, Herbert Harper graduated from Clemmons High School, received a bachelor's degree from David Lipscomb University in Nashville, and performed additional studies at the University of Tennessee's Nashville campus; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper has also studied Historic Preservation Planning at the Institute of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Historic and Archeological Preservation with the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Commission; and

WHEREAS, in his first professional career, from 1949 to 1968, Herbert Harper was a partner in a Nashville real estate and construction firm; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper's legendary career with the Tennessee Historical Commission began in 1969, when he was named director of field services, a post he would hold for six years, during which time he would draft the first plan for historic preservation in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, named Executive Director in 1975, Mr. Harper quickly developed a well deserved reputation as a tireless worker, thoughtful preservationist, and dedicated professional, developing and implementing a cornucopia of projects across our great state; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper is responsible for nominating some of the first properties in Tennessee to the National Register of Historic Places; during his tenure 1,968 entries were added to the National Register, including 262 historic districts and a total number of 41,272 properties; and

WHEREAS, Herbert Harper was instrumental in the implementation of Local Historic District Zoning in Tennessee and the passage of the first local Historic Overlay Zoning District in Jonesborough, "Tennessee's Oldest Town", which is recognized as one of the great historic preservation success stories in the nation; and

WHEREAS, he was also responsible for the initiation of a program to locate and record potentially historic properties in Tennessee, resulting in over 150,000 properties being photographed and recorded since the early 1970s; and

WHEREAS, a truly innovative gentleman, Mr. Harper oversaw the implementation and administration of the Federal Tax Credits for Historic Preservation in Tennessee program that has leveraged the investment of over \$700 million in historic properties in the state; and

WHEREAS, safeguarding Tennessee's treasures, Herbert Harper worked with purpose and conviction to secure the addition of five historic properties to the list of those acquired and preserved by Tennessee state government: Rock Castle, Wynnewood, the Alex Haley Home, Burra Burra Mine, and the Chester Inn; and

WHEREAS, working hand in hand with government at all levels, Mr. Harper implemented a program to certify historic preservation programs of local governments in Tennessee and oversaw the review of more than 60,000 federal undertakings to ensure the identification, evaluation, and protection of any historic properties affected by such undertakings, resulting in the avoidance of harm to innumerable historic properties; and

WHEREAS, his illustrious tenure also saw the erection of some 1,400 historic markers in Tennessee, the publication of three editions of a public guide to those markers, and the publication of Volumes II through VI of the *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly* and Volumes IX, X, and XI of the *Messages of the Governors of Tennessee*; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his other duties, Herbert L. Harper served with distinction as editor of *The Courier*, the newsletter of the Tennessee Historical Commission, for twenty-five years, and he produced many programs and wrote numerous articles about Tennessee history, such works often reflecting his lifelong interest in the War Between the States; and

WHEREAS, a nationally recognized leader in his field, Herbert L. Harper was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, from 1983 to 1987, in addition to serving as the State Historic Preservation Officer or Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for Tennessee from 1972 to 2006, one of the longest tenures for this office in the nation; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Mr. Harper has received many awards from various historical organizations, including the Patron's Award for "Outstanding Contributions to Historic Preservation" from the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County; and

WHEREAS, Herbert L. Harper is an active and important part of his community and his profession and has been a member of twenty or more professional and historical organizations, serving as an officer or board member for many of them; in Franklin, he has a long record of active participation in the Williamson County Historical Association, the Heritage Foundation, the Carter House Association, the Carnton Plantation Association, and Save the Franklin Battlefield; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Mr. Harper is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his wife of fifty-eight years, Bettye, and their six children, fourteen grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Herbert L. Harper, a longtime member of the Brentwood Church of Christ, is an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and he epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service, Herbert L. Harper demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity throughout his estimable career, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of both his colleagues and the citizens of this great State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Herbert L. Harper for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission, salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and wish him all the best as he enjoys his much deserved retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.